

NATIONAL  
LIBRARY  
OF AUSTRALIA

# Thank You

## 2021 Report to Donors

The National Library of Australia acknowledges Australia's First Nations Peoples – the First Australians – as the Traditional Owners and Custodians of this land and gives respect to the Elders – past and present – and through them to all Australian Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.

# Thank You

*Dear Friends*

By the time you read this, the Library will have reopened its front doors to the public – a very happy day for us all.

Through all the challenges the Library has faced over the last year, we have been buoyed by the generous support of our donors, large and small. The pages that follow show how productive we have been in progressing our goal of making our most important and impactful collections available to everyone, everywhere, through digitisation.

We spent another year apart from each other in 2021. I am enormously proud that, once again, our long-term investments in our digital offerings have enabled us to stay open online, even when the Library building has had to close. Your support has been crucial in helping us to do so.

In April, the Library received a transformative gift of \$1 million from the Susan and Isaac Wakil Foundation to digitise key parts of our performing arts collections. We are honoured by the Foundation's support, which reflects the passion of Susan and Isaac Wakil for Australia's remarkable performing arts history. We know that sharing these collections online will help to inspire artists and audiences for many years to come.

In March 2022, we will display some of these collections in our exhibition *On Stage: Spotlight on Our Performing Arts*, an exhibition supported by the Maxine Poynton Baker bequest. On site and online, a rich year of sharing our performing arts collections lies ahead.

Among the selection of wonderful digitisation projects you will read about here, one particularly close to my heart was the subject of our 2021 appeal – digitisation of the Australian Federation of Women Voters collection. A record number of you gave generously to help us to bring this collection online, and to share the story of the long road towards equality for Australian women. I look forward to seeing the voices of these women brought out of the archives and onto the internet to inform and inspire generations to come.

We look forward to welcoming more Fellows and Scholars, and to the return of our flagship lectures in 2022. We are also delighted to have a newly minted Rare Books and Music Curator, Dr Susannah Helman. This new role has been fully funded for three years by two of the Library's longstanding Patrons. You can read more on page 15 about Dr Helman's plans to further public understanding and scholarly use of these parts of our collection.

Finally, it was a great pleasure to see so many of you in person at our Patrons dinner in March, and to hear Jane Hemstritch's wonderful account of why she was moved to support digitisation of our collection of almanacs! I hope to see even more of you in the year ahead.

My thanks again to all of you – our Patrons, philanthropic donors, collection donors, friends and volunteers – for your support of our work.

We are, as always, sincerely grateful.

*Marie Louise*





**COVER:** 'Puccini's Great Opera, "Turandot"' advertisement in *Souvenir: Grand Opera Season ... Presented by J.C. Williamson Ltd and Dame Nellie Melba* (detail) (Melbourne: Specialty Press, 1928), Collection of J.C. Williamson Production Records and Ephemera 1923–1964, nla.cat-vn5753920; **OPPOSITE:** D'Ora Benda, *Poses from The Demon Machine*, 1936, Papers of Gertrud Bodenwieser, nla.cat-vn3100991; **FOLLOWING PAGE:** Leonard French, *Stained-glass Window*, 1967, Belgian and French chunk glass.

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# Your Support at a Glance



Philanthropic support for the Library since 1 July 2018 now totals **\$6.761 million**, including **\$2.758 million** raised 2020–2021 (\$1,745,092 in gifts received, \$1,013,175 in pledges).



**1,137**  
ONSITE AND ONLINE  
VOLUNTEERS



**332,674**  
VISITORS TO  
THE BUILDING



**26.3 million**  
VISITORS ONLINE  
**17.9 million**  
VISITORS ON TROVE

**1,603**  
FRIENDS OF THE  
NATIONAL LIBRARY  
MEMBERSHIPS



**691**  
DONORS

**1.4 million**  
PAGES DIGITISED IN 2021



**791**  
GIFTS



**441** PATRONS

- 51%** supported our digitisation programs
- 22%** supported fellowships, scholarships and study grants
- 27%** supported a wide range of other priorities



# Gifts

## Digital Encore for Australia's Performing Arts

Thanks to a remarkable gift of \$1 million from the Susan and Isaac Wakil Foundation, the Library can bring the extraordinary legacy of the Australian performing arts online.

Isaac Wakil AO and Susan Wakil AO have been among Australia's greatest patrons of the arts. Their legacy of giving includes landmark donations to the Art Gallery of New South Wales and Opera Australia, and generous support for a range of other cultural organisations.

Now, with the support of their Foundation, we are bringing key parts of the Library's unique performing arts collection online. These collections include material associated with Australian opera icon Dame Nellie Melba, pioneering dancer, actor, choreographer and stage director Sir Robert Helpmann, and composer and music educator Miriam Hyde AO, among others. This project will also include selections from the enormous archives of J.C. Williamson Ltd (1874–1976) – for nearly a century, the dominant theatrical agency in Australia.

*Susan and I shared a great love of the performing arts. Preserving and sharing these collections online will allow everyone to enjoy these great performances once again. We hope that it will inspire new generations of creative artists and performers to create wonderful work in the future.*

Isaac Wakil AO

Digitisation work on this project has begun, and the first of these collections is now beginning to appear on Trove, with many more to come.

We are enormously grateful to the Susan and Isaac Wakil Foundation for making this project possible.



**OPPOSITE:** page in *Adam Zero Scrapbook of Sir Robert Helpmann* (detail), b&w photograph, Papers of Robert Helpmann 1933–1946, nla.cat-vn2901045;

**ABOVE:** (top) Susan Wakil AO and Isaac Wakil AO; (bottom) *Costume Design* (detail), Collection of J.C. Williamson Production Records and Ephemera 1923–1964, nla.cat-vn5753920.







Issues of *Australian Poetry*, 1941–1948,  
nla.cat-vn2186816.

**Poems and Angry Penguins**

Periodicals are an important resource for understanding the development of Australian poetry and literary culture – almost 50 Australian literary journals were published in the three decades after the First World War. But this material is not widely accessible. Even the most iconic, the ‘Ern Malley’ issue of *Angry Penguins*, is not available online. Now, with the support of the Jibb Foundation, these landmarks of Australian literary history will be available online to educate and inspire a new generation of readers.

**Colonial Artists Set for Trove**

There is more to the National Library than books, and visitors to the Treasures Gallery will be familiar with some of the highlights of our extensive art collection. The Library’s collections of early and colonial art owe a great deal to the collecting of Sir Rex Nan Kivell, who gifted over 3,400 paintings to the Library. Only a small proportion of this collection can be displayed at any one time, and while some material has already been digitised, a generous gift from Sally White OAM will help us to bring much more of our collection of early and colonial art online for art lovers everywhere to enjoy.

**A Dance for the Ages**

Gertrud Bodenweiser and Eileen Kramer are two of the most influential figures in Australian dance history. Their cultural impact still shapes dance technique, costume design, music and staging, and dance photography to this day. Our thanks to the Dick and Pip Smith Foundation for allowing us to digitise the photographs, letters, writings, costume designs, sketches and other ephemera from the collections of these creative visionaries so that they can continue to shape artistic thought.





## Echoes of Equality

We are immensely grateful to the many hundreds of supporters who donated to our fundraising appeal to help digitise the papers of the Australian Federation of Women Voters. This appeal was our most successful ever, raising a record \$209,000 to fund the digitisation of this and other women's activities.

Formed in 1921, the Australian Federation of Women Voters fought for women's equality across a range of issues. This significant collection of papers provides deep insight into how actively engaged women collaborated and contributed to the causes of the day: equal pay; women in policing; economic and educational rights; and much more.

While the collection includes the words and voices of well-known figures such as Ruby Rich, Jessie Street and Bessie Rischbieth, it also highlights the work of dozens of pioneering women whose work was not well known, then or now.

Thanks to the generous response to this appeal, we look forward to bringing the Federation's collection online for everyone in 2022. In doing so, we can ensure that the names of these women who championed equality will inform and inspire future generations.

OPPOSITE and ABOVE: Records of the Australian Federation of Women Voters 1920–1983, nla.cat-vn1850710.





**OPPOSITE:** detail of frontispiece in *A Few Hints on Cooking from Aunt Mary* (Sydney: Rose Brothers, 1925), nla.cat-vn2166033; **ABOVE:** Herbert J. Rumsey, *The Australian Tomato Book* (Dundas, NSW: Rumsey, 1930).

## Tasting Australia's Cooking History

Thanks to a generous multi-year gift from Claire Crocker and Donna Mottek through their business the Australian Ethical Food Group, a generous serving of Australia's culinary history will be preserved for Australia and all the world to enjoy.

Australia's culinary publishing history is diverse and colourful. The very first cookbook published and printed in this country outlined 58 different uses of ice in the kitchen. Our collection of nearly a century's worth of what followed captures everything from parrot pie to pavlova.

Food is intrinsically tied to our national identity, and as food producers, the Australian Ethical Food Group understands that better than anyone. We are honoured by their gift and excited to share the pages of these cookbooks with curious connoisseurs everywhere.

## Old Boys and New Treasures

Canberra Grammar School is one of the oldest schools in the Australian Capital Territory, and the alma mater of former prime minister Gough Whitlam, among many others. The National Library's collections include extensive holdings of print and manuscript materials associated with the school.

Thanks to Grammar old boy David Kenyon, nearly 100 years of school history will be shared with the world. By making this material available online, we are not only sharing a history of interest to the school's far-flung alumni community, but also sharing a history intricately connected with that of our nation's capital.

We are grateful to the Kenyon Foundation and Canberra Grammar School for their support of this project.





## Rare Opportunity for Rare Collections

A new and specialised curatorial role at the Library has been fully funded for three years by two of our longstanding Patrons. They are passionate collectors, scholars and writers in the field of rare books and music, and believe that the Library is best placed to build upon this knowledge. They have generously funded a new curatorial position to promote knowledge of the Library's collection of rare books and music, both nationally and internationally.

Some of the rare treasures we hold in the collection include many landmark works in the history of the book – including the *Nuremberg Chronicle* (1493), known for its lavish woodcuts, Kepler's *Rudolphine Tables* (1627–1630) with its frontispiece that the astronomer designed himself, and John Lewin's *Birds of New South Wales* (1813), the earliest illustrated book printed in Australia. The Library's extraordinary music collection contains over 300,000 scores, with particular strengths in sheet music and the archives of great Australian performers, conductors and composers.

Dr Susannah Helman has stepped into this new role and is excited by the prospect of furthering understanding and scholarly use of the Library's rare book and music collection, as well as the opportunity to share this knowledge through publications, conference presentations and other public engagement opportunities. In her own words:

*The Library has marvellous collections of rare books and music that are fascinating to study and deserve to be better known. I am extremely grateful for the opportunity to delve deeper into our rich collections and share my research with a variety of audiences. I hope to highlight how diverse our collections are and how they can be used in different, and perhaps unexpected, contexts.*

OPPOSITE: Rare books at the  
National Library of Australia, 2021;  
ABOVE: Dr Susannah Helman.



# Navigating Political Archives

The National Union of Australian University Students (NUAUS) was the representative body for tertiary students in Australia from 1937 to 1971, succeeded by the Australian Union of Students (AUS). The NUAUS/AUS archive at the National Library is an enormous repository of almost 1,000 boxes of material. It contains insights into the student politics of earlier eras, but also important perspectives on social and political issues in Australia and overseas. The archive is also of enormous value in recording the early careers of student politicians who would go on to become Australian luminaries, including former High Court chief justice the Honourable Sir Gerard Brennan AC KBE, former High Court justice the Honourable Michael Kirby AC CMG and former prime minister Julia Gillard AC.

The riches of this archive have remained hidden due to its disorganised state. This is being remedied through support by union alumni for a dedicated archivist to work on the collection. By improving the usability of the archive, this remarkable resource for Australian political and social history will be more readily accessible for future researchers.

# America the Beautiful

Dr Anne Kent and the late Dr Bruce Kent have been longstanding friends, Petherick Readers and Patrons of the Library. Earlier this year, Anne’s generosity enabled the Library to acquire a wonderful new collection item, a work of ink on silk by Marion Mahony Griffin, with lyrics from the famous song by Katharine Lee Bates illustrated by Griffin’s design. This is a wonderful addition to the Library’s existing holdings relating to this iconic architect, and a precious memento of the longstanding relationship between Anne, Bruce and the Library.



**ABOVE:** Special Collections Reading Room, 2021; **OPPOSITE:** Ellis Rowan, *Golden Bowerbird* (detail), 1917, nla.cat-vn1161577.



# The Greatest Gift is Friendship

The Friends of the National Library is a group of passionate people working together to support the Library and its collections. As an important part of the Library community, the Friends promote and support the Library and the contribution it makes to our society.

As Platinum Patrons, the Friends have also been longstanding financial supporters of the Library. They have recently agreed to continue their generous support of a Creative Arts Fellowship to provide an opportunity for artists to immerse themselves in a collection, and a Staff Travelling Fellowship to allow National Library staff to pursue their learning and development ambitions and progress Library strategic priorities.

We would like to thank the Friends of the National Library for their passionate support and their enduring commitment to promoting the work of the Library.

Being a Friend of the National Library grants invitations to Friends-only events and exclusive use of the Library’s Friends Lounge, as well as a range of discounts at the Library bookshop and with other partners.

If you are interested in becoming a Friend of the National Library, please go to [nla.gov.au/friends](https://nla.gov.au/friends), call our Friends Executive Officer on 02 6262 1551 or email [friends@nla.gov.au](mailto:friends@nla.gov.au).





2021 Summer Scholars (left to right):  
Brendan Casey, Jake Gordon, Tim Calabria,  
Catherine Gay, Victoria Perin.

# Scholarships and Fellowships

Over 2020–2021, 20 fellowships, scholarships and study grants were awarded by the Library. These programs are entirely funded by philanthropic support. We are grateful to the generous donors who help to nurture academics and creative practitioners from a wide range of disciplines as they explore the Library’s remarkable collections.

## Exploration and Investigation

University of Melbourne PhD candidate Catherine Gay spoke on her experience as the Library’s 2021 Carol Mills Summer Scholar:

*In early 2021, four other early career researchers and I were awarded scholarships for travel to Canberra and special, supported access to the Library’s collection and facilities.*

*I started my PhD in March 2020, shortly before Victoria went into lockdown due to the COVID-19 pandemic, and until I arrived in Canberra for my residency, I had very limited access to primary source materials for my thesis project, ‘All life and usefulness’: Girls in Victoria, 1835–1901. Delving into the Library’s collections, I found that I could massively broaden the focus of that project.*

*My residency was also the first opportunity I had to meet PhD candidates from other universities. The sense of community that developed amongst the scholars during our time at the Library was vital for all of us. We treasured the ability to network and to share a workspace with people from other academic disciplines and backgrounds in the Library’s Fellows Room.*

The Summer Scholarship program is one of several residency programs that the Library is proud to offer. The National Library of Australia Fellowship and Creative Arts Fellowship programs also offer unprecedented access and financial assistance for travel and accommodation to established researchers and creative practitioners. These programs are held in high regard by the academic and creative communities, and none of them could occur without support from donors.



# Events

## 2021 Patrons Dinner

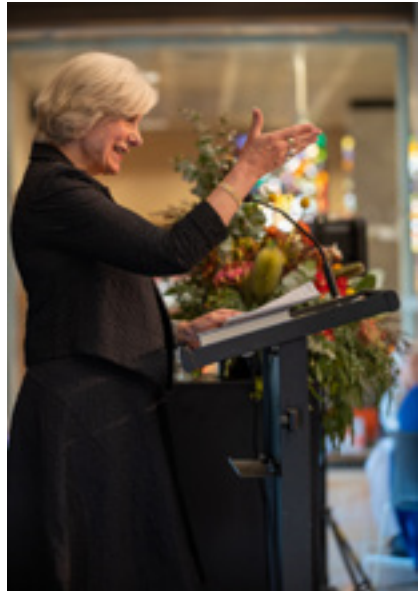
In a year where so many planned gatherings had to be deferred or cancelled, it was wonderful to have close to 70 of our Patrons join us in March for a thank-you dinner at the Library.

On the night, the Chair of the Council of the National Library of Australia, the Hon. Dr Brett Mason, offered the Library's heartfelt thanks to our philanthropic supporters for the enormous difference that they make to the work of the Library.

Natalie Wilson, Curator of Australian and Pacific Art at the Art Gallery of New South Wales, and co-curator with Dr Gary Werskey of the exhibition *A Nation Imagined: The Artists of the Picturesque Atlas*, introduced this remarkable exhibition, presented in partnership with the Art Gallery of New South Wales. Drawing on the Library's own collections and generous loans from others, the exhibition documented the artists who contributed to the *Atlas*, their particular vision of Australian history, and their influence on the subsequent Australian Impressionism movement.

Our wonderful keynote speaker for the evening was Principal Patron and former deputy chair of the Library Council, Jane Hemstritch, who spoke about the reasons behind her decision to fund digitisation of the Library's collection of Australian almanacs, many of which are now available on Trove, with more to come. Her motivations include a remarkable personal connection. On first looking into a selection of the Library's almanacs, Jane came across a reference to Hiram Allen Crawford – one-time mayor of Beechworth in Victoria, and Jane's great-great grandfather! By making these collections available online for everyone, we hope that many more such serendipitous discoveries will be made by other readers in the years to come.

Our thanks again to everyone who joined us, and we hope to see more of you in 2022.



**ABOVE:** Jane Hemstritch speaks at the 2021 Patrons dinner; **OPPOSITE:** see cover information.



# How to Support

## Give

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## Become a Friend

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## Visit

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## Explore

[nla.gov.au/collections](https://nla.gov.au/collections)

## Share



For further information, and to discuss supporting the Library, please contact:

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